
A Junior Officer's Guide to Interviewing

Prepare for success in your next interview



THE CENTER FOR
JUNIOR OFFICERS

INSPIRE. DEVELOP. INNOVATE.

Purpose

Prepare junior officers to successfully interview for their next Army position

When might I have to interview?

- Company Command
 - Aide-de-Camp
 - AIM 2.0 Marketplace
-

Why Interviews?



An interview allows a unit to assess if your skills, experience, and personality meet their requirements – for both the job and the organization as a whole

An interview also allows you to determine if the organization and position you're applying for meet your needs and wants

The process will vary!

But there are some general tips that will help in most situations



It's a Process

You can look at the interview process as a three phased event

Pre-Interview

You've made a good enough impression to get an interview. Set the stage for success



Interview

How to WOW them during the actual event



Post-Interview

Close things out right and set yourself apart





**The interview may begin
before you realize it**

Do your unit research

Check the web and social media, talk to current or former unit members or those who held the position you want. Know the mission and current events for unit (may have to look at one level up or down to get a good picture)

Do your job research

Know what job you want and why. Are there prerequisites?

Send a note

Think of this as a cover letter to your resume. Show your interest and briefly explain why you're a good candidate. POCs will vary but start with the XO if you aren't given a specific POC

Rehearse your interview

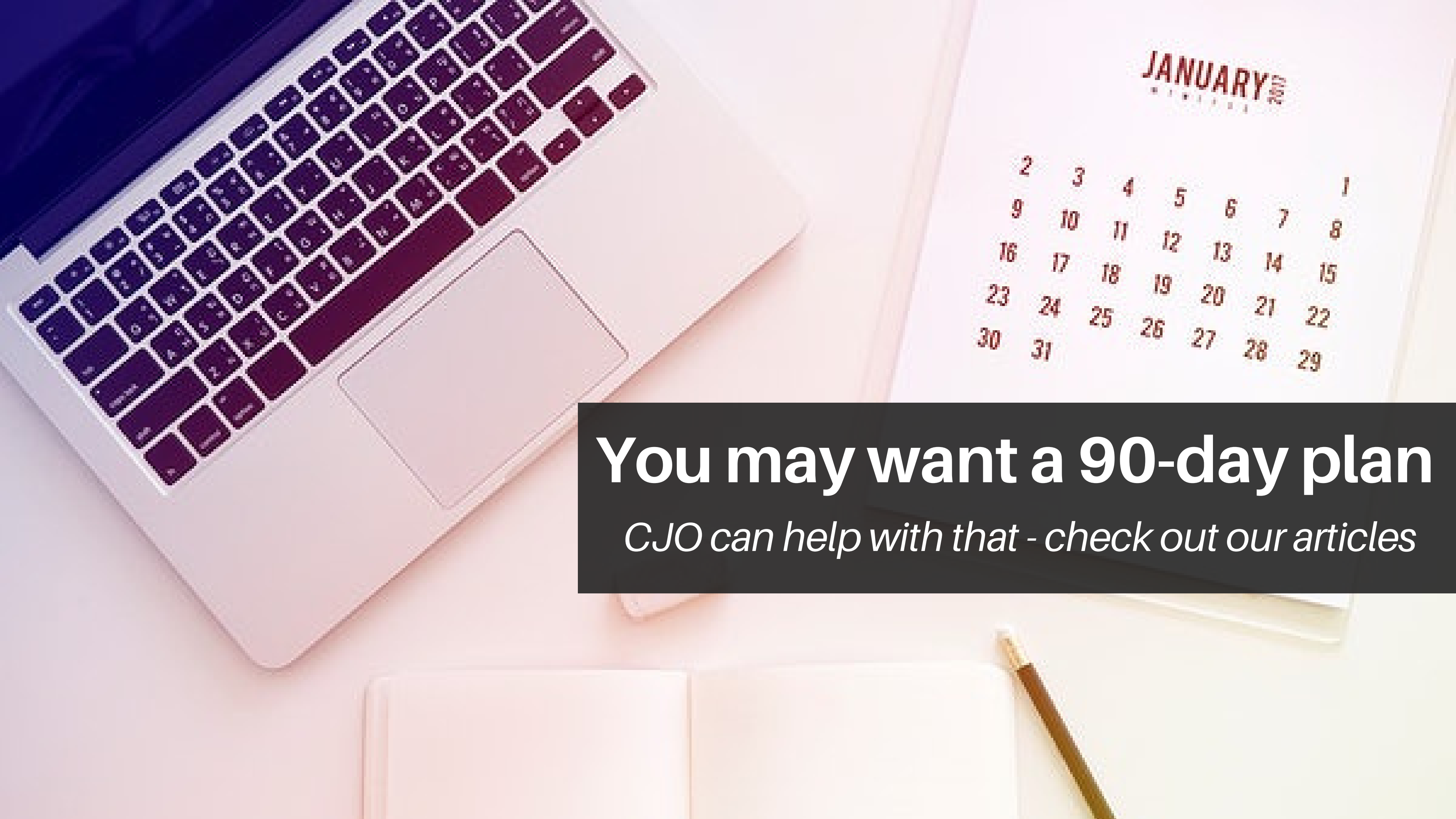
Winging it won't work. You may think you're smooth - others are smoother - because they rehearsed (and did better research)

Confirm details

Verify phone number/comms check, confirm location and route, confirm uniform. If possible, confirm who will be interviewing you (especially if more than 1 x person)

Pre-Interview

Critically important for not blowing your chance



You may want a 90-day plan
CJO can help with that - check out our articles



Make a good first impression

Be on time and prepared; Try to remember the names of those interviewing you (if more than one) and use them when possible

Be focused in your responses

Answer the question and don't ramble. if you don't know...say you don't know!

Demonstrate self-awareness

Temper confidence with modesty

Show you're going to be a good teammate

Make it clear you're someone these people want to work with

Prepare insightful questions

Ensure these aren't answered easily by simple research. Use them to show you've done your homework and know what YOU want out of the job and unit. Also use them to determine if you actually want the job

Interview

Now your preparation pays off

Interview

A deeper dive



In person

Be relaxed/comfortable in chair

Eye contact; don't focus on just one person

Arrive early (but you don't have to sit in the lobby/waiting area)



Virtual

Plug in your laptop

Restart ~90min prior to start - \$!@!! updates!!!!

Have notes handy (off screen)

Prep your background (what is behind you)

Check our your lighting



Phone

Have notes handy

Full charged phone



Be prepared for a second interview

Confirm method of interview and do a comms check

Send a thank you note

Email at a minimum, hand written is nicer. And not just to the Commander - remember those gatekeepers!

Post-Interview

You might not quite be done yet...make sure you leave a final good impression

Know the unit ◀

Understand its history, mission, some current events (see social media!)

Be polite to everyone ◀

Gatekeepers also influence the decision maker's impression of you!

Be authentic ◀

Be yourself. And don't tell the interviewer what you think they want to hear.

Be honest ◀

Don't tell the unit they're your #1 choice if they're not. Be forthright in what you want to join the team (location, short queue, etc.)

Know your interviewers ◀

Review their profile on LinkedIn, read anything they've written. Get to "know them" before the interview as best you can

Ask for what you want ◀

People aren't mind readers. Know the position you're interested in and be able to explain why

Do these things

Some things that should help your chances



Don't do these things

Avoid these common mistakes



- ▶ **Don't assume your file speaks for itself**
 - Highlight your strengths and points that demonstrate your fit with the job and the team
- ▶ **Don't be arrogant or overconfident**
 - If asked to self-evaluate, think hard about your assessment. Saying you're the best in everything happens more than you think and often doesn't resonate well
- ▶ **Don't disparage others**
 - The Army is a surprisingly small place
- ▶ **Don't overcommunicate prior**
 - 1 or 2 emails / note is enough. Don't over do it



- Tell me about yourself
 - *Don't simply go over your resume here. They can read!
 - *Do consider some "storytelling" tips (see CJO website)
 - * This is also a good piece: <https://hbr.org/2019/08/how-to-respond-to-so-tell-me-about-yourself-in-a-job-interview>
- What do you know about our organization?
- Why do you want to join our team?
- Why do you want this position?
- How have your experiences prepped you for this position?
- What excites you about this job the most? The least?
- What are your strengths?
- What are your weaknesses?
 - *Don't try to be cute and make a weakness a strength
 - *Have ideas on how you can address your weaknesses
- What questions do you have of us?
- Is there anything else you'd like us to know?

Sample Questions

Actual prompts from leaders in the field. You should have polished responses to these questions (i.e., practices these with a friend!)



You may also want to have a writing sample

CJO Can help with that





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